



MONTANA STATE HOSPITAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE

HANDLING NEEDLES & SHARPS

Effective Date: December 18, 2002

Policy #: IC-04

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I. PURPOSE: To provide a safe disposal method for used needles and sharps.

II. POLICY: Personnel will use the biohazard marked, disposable needle collection containers whenever disposing of syringes, lancets, needles or any other collection device that is used to puncture a patient's skin. The containers are located in each Medication Room available to the nursing personnel in the Laboratory, Dental Office, and Medical Clinic. Smaller biohazard marked, disposable containers are available for remote use. Replacements for both containers are available from the Commissary.

III. DEFINITIONS:

A. Biohazard: Bio - combining form denoting relationship to life.
Hazard - a chance of being injured or harmed; danger

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES:

- A. Nursing Staff - To always place sharps in biohazard marked containers. To arrange transportation of containers to the Heating Plant for proper disposal.
- B. Teamsters - To transport the biohazard containers to the Heating Plant.
- C. Operating Engineer (Heating Plant) - to autoclave biohazard materials prior to proper disposal.
- D. Maintenance Supervisor - Will interpret results of killets used in the autoclave to assure sterility. Report deviations to the Infection Control (IC) Nurse. Quarterly reports to IC nurse for reporting to Infection Control Committee.

V. PROCEDURES:

- A. Handle sharp objects carefully. Always wear gloves.
 - 1. Do not cut, bend, break or routinely reinsert used needles into original sheath by hand.

Do not detach used needle from syringe. For needles attached to IV tubing, remove the capped needle from the tubing and discard into approved container.

2. Discard sharp objects intact immediately after use into the biohazard marked impervious needle disposal container conveniently placed in all clinical areas, or in the smaller portable container for remote use.
3. Contaminated needles are never to be recapped.
4. Personnel should never reach into the needle container.
 - a. Sharps containers must be kept upright, replaced routinely and kept from becoming overfilled. When removed from work area, containers will be closed to prevent spillage or protrusions during handling and must be transported in upright position.
 - b. When the containers are 3/4 full, it is the responsibility of the medication nurse to make arrangements for the teamster to take the container to the Heating Plant. A clean container located on the unit should be put in place (at the same time the 3/4 full container is removed) by the medication nurse.
 - c. The Heating Plant will decontaminate the containers by autoclaving the container for one hour at 250 degrees F at fifteen pound pressure. After decontamination, the containers can be dispensed to proper disposal sites as specified by local, state and federal law.
 - d. Report immediately all accidents involving any used needle or sharp to the Infection Control nurse.

NOTE: Place the offending implement in an appropriate safe, sealed contaminated waste container to be made available when investigating the incident.

VI. REFERENCES: Dorlands Illustrated Medical Dictionary, Twenty Fifth Edition; The American Heritage Dictionary, Second College Edition

VII. COLLABORATED WITH: Central Supply Clerk, Nursing Services, and Infection Control Committee

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XII. ATTACHMENTS: None

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Thomas Gray, MD Date
Medical Director